

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

September 10, 2026 || Page 1 | 5

From pilot line to industrial implementation: FIRST by FMD brings together decision-makers for Europe's semiconductor future

Europe has invested billions in its semiconductor industry. The decisive question now is how the pilot lines established under the EU Chips Act can create industrial value creation. Leading representatives from industry, research, and policymaking will discuss this at [FIRST by FMD](#) on September 30 and October 1, 2026, at the EUREF Campus in Berlin.

The APECS Pilot Line for Advanced Packaging and Heterogeneous Integration provides access to design, development, testing, and pilot production, helping move technologies from research to industrial application. Prof. Dr. Holger Hanselka, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, emphasizes that this transfer can succeed only through close collaboration between research and industry: "Europe's future in microelectronics will be decided not just by roadmaps and in the labs, but by joint efforts of industry and scientific organizations to rapidly translate research excellence into scalable industrial technologies."

From research to production: How Europe can translate research and investment into industrial strength

The new FIRST by FMD forum focuses on the political and economic conditions needed for this transition and the technological strengths Europe can build on. Sessions, panel discussions, technological deep dives into key topics for the European semiconductor ecosystem, and strategic spotlights bring together a range of perspectives. The program covers both access to infrastructure and the stable framework needed for the transition to industrial manufacturing.

“Supporting process development capabilities is much needed and appreciated. However, we also need policies allowing for flexible scale-up and sustainable long-term supply,” says Michael Hosemann of Siemens Healthineers. The importance of these broader framework conditions is also reflected at the policy level. Alexandra-Gwyn Paetz of the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) emphasizes their strategic significance: “Germany's position in microelectronics has far-reaching implications for our innovative strength – and thus also for our industrial competitiveness, technological sovereignty, and economic resilience. Our High-Tech Agenda therefore strengthens microelectronics as a key enabling technology.”

PRESS RELEASE

September 10, 2026 || Page 2 | 5

Against this backdrop, the further development of the EU Chips Act raises the question of what Europe needs for the next phase of its semiconductor strategy. The Chips Act 2.0 must support industrial scaling and long-term value creation in Europe alongside research and new production capacity.

One concrete expectation for how this should translate into policy comes from Carsten Salewski of Viscom: “In my view ‘EU added value’ in Chips Act 2.0 must be EU made production equipment for ‘new or substantially upgraded facilities for electronics manufacturing or integration’.”

Advanced packaging, chiplets and design: Where Europe's opportunities lie

Europe can strengthen its strategic position by building on its existing capabilities in advanced packaging, heterogeneous integration, chiplets, and chip design. Marcel Schäfer of TRUMPF highlights the importance of packaging in this context: “Advanced Packaging is the next battlefield. Europe needs packaging sovereignty alongside fab sovereignty. Laser beam-shaping enables chiplet integration at scale.”

Chip design is equally important to Europe's position in this technological landscape. As Thomas Heurung of Siemens EDA notes: “Speed is of the essence in semiconductors. AI-enabled EDA and Europe's chip design platform help startups reach PoC, funding and customers faster.”

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The role these technologies and the infrastructure they require can play in Europe's semiconductor strategy is a core part of the FIRST program. They will also feature on the event's Demo Street, a dedicated showcase area where visitors can explore technologies and specific applications in power electronics, advanced packaging, radio frequency, MEMS, sensors, and photonics and speak directly with experts on site.

PRESS RELEASE

September 10, 2026 || Page 3 | 5

Leading organizations from across the microelectronics sector

FIRST brings together leading organizations from across the European semiconductor ecosystem. Semiconductor manufacturers such as GlobalFoundries, Intel, STMicroelectronics, NXP, and UMS will meet equipment and integration providers including ASML, ASMPT, TRUMPF, Viscom, and Comet. Siemens EDA, EuroCDP, and the Chipdesign Germany network represent Europe's design infrastructure, while Bosch, Audi, Siemens Healthineers, Diehl Defence, HENSOLDT, and Thales bring requirements from key application sectors into the discussion. Representatives of the European Commission, the Chips Joint Undertaking, and the BMFTR, along with representatives from the FMD and universities, contribute perspectives from policymaking and research.

Media accreditation for FIRST by FMD is now open. Media representatives interested in covering the event can register at www.first-by-fmd.de.



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About APECS

Under the EU Chips Act, FMD is establishing APECS over the coming years as a comprehensive pilot line for resilient and trusted heterogeneous systems, supporting innovation across European industry. By enabling new functionalities through System Technology Co-Optimization (STCO), end-to-end design, and pilot production capabilities, the pilot line helps advance innovations from research toward practical, scalable manufacturing solutions. APECS also provides a one-stop shop for customers across virtually all major industrial sectors, including large companies, SMEs, and start-ups. As part of APECS, FIRST by FMD was initiated as a European forum that brings decision-makers together to discuss key trends in microelectronics. APECS brings together the capabilities, infrastructure, and expertise of ten partners from eight European countries. In Germany, twelve Fraunhofer institutes and two Leibniz institutes participate in the pilot line. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft serves as project coordinator, while APECS is implemented by FMD.

More information is available at <https://www.apecs.eu/>

PRESS RELEASE

September 10, 2026 || Page 4 | 5

About the Research Fab Microelectronics Germany (FMD)

FMD, a collaboration among 13 Fraunhofer institutes and the Leibniz institutes FBH and IHP, is the central point of contact for all questions related to micro- and nanoelectronics research and development in Germany and Europe. As a one-stop shop, FMD brings together the research excellence, technological expertise, and system capabilities of its cooperating institutes to develop customized, integrated solutions tailored to specific needs. Since its establishment as a virtual umbrella organization in 2017, FMD has become one of the largest research networks of its kind. Today, it brings together more than 5,400 employees and a unique range of expertise and infrastructure.

More information is available at www.forschungsfabrik-mikroelektronik.de/eng

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